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HEAVY RAINFALL TO CONTINUE IN SOUTHERN STATES TILL FEB

The India Meteorological Department has forecast above-normal rainfall between December and February in most southern states

WARMER WINTER LIKELY IN NORTH INDIA

The weather department said coastal Andhra Pradesh, Rayalaseema, south interior Karnataka, inner Puducherry, Tamil Nadu and Kerala will continue to get abundant showers. In its winter forecast released on Wednesday, the IMD predicted normal or above normal (warmer) minimum temperature over north Indian states during the 3-month period

LA NINA CONDITIONS MAY PLAY OUT: IMD

- However, below normal minimum temperature is most likely over some parts of north-interior peninsula that comprises north Karnataka, parts of Telangana and Marathwada, the IMD said
- La Nina conditions are likely to strengthen and peak to moderate conditions during the upcoming winter season, it added

169%

EXCESS RAIN IN ANDHRA, TAMIL NADU, KERALA & INTERIOR K'TAKA IN NOVEMBER

CHENNAI • MADURAI • VIJAYAWADA • BENGALURU • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KOZHIKODE • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELAGAVI • BHUBANESWAR • SHIVAMOGGA • MANGALURU • TIRUPATI • TIRUCHY • TIRUNELVELI • SAMBALPUR • HUBBALLI • DHARWAPURI • KOTTAYAM • KANNUR • VILLUPURAM • KOLLAM • WARANGAL • TADEPALLIGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM • THRISSUR • KALABURAGI

Suspended since March 2020 to deal with second Covid wave; special flights, however, operating since July last year

INT'L FLIGHTS BACK ON HOLD

KUMAR VIKRAM @ New Delhi

DAYS after announcing resumption of international commercial flights from December 15, the Centre on Wednesday indefinitely put it off in the wake of concerns over the spread of the newly detected Omicron strain of Covid globally.

"In view of the evolving global scenario with the emergence of new variants of concern, the situation is being watched closely in consultation with all stakeholders and an appropriate decision indicating the effective date of resumption of scheduled commercial international passenger services shall be notified in due course," the Directorate General of Civil Aviation said.

The decision came days after PM Narendra Modi asked officials to review plans to ease international travel restrictions by factoring in the Omicron outbreak in countries labeled at-risk. The at-risk nations are: Europe, UK, South Africa, Brazil, Botswana, China, Mauritius, New Zealand, Zimbabwe, Singapore, Hong Kong and Israel.

International commercial flights have been suspended for as many as 21 months since March 2020. However, special passenger flights have been operating since July last year under air bubble arrangements with around 28 countries.

Many state governments have already urged Modi not to resume flights from 'at risk' countries. Maharashtra went further and directed all international arrivals to take mandatory RT-PCR tests and 14 days of home quarantine, even if they are not from at-risk nations, prompting a rebuke from the Centre. It directed the Uddhav government to align itself with the guidelines issued by the Centre .

Maharashtra had also made it mandatory for those from at risk countries to be placed in institutional quarantine of seven days, during which they had to take three RT-PCR tests (on the second, fourth and seventh days). A positive test would land them in hospital.

Union Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan's missive said the state's order is in divergence with the Centre's SoPs. "I would urge you to align the orders issued by the state with the guidelines issued by the Ministry of Health," he said.

Arriving passengers leave a terminal at the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport in Mumbai on Wednesday | AFP

An easy guide to track Omicron spread and how countries are tackling it

PAGE 18

2% RANDOM SAMPLING

Further revising its advisory, the Ministry of Civil Aviation on Wednesday said only 2% of passengers from non 'at-risk' countries will be subject to random sampling for Covid as against 5% earlier

All such passengers will be permitted to leave the airport after giving the samples, the ministry explained in a set of Frequently Asked Questions | P18

JAB-O-METER
TAKE YOUR SHOT
Nov 30 72,49,189 doses
Dec 01 71,93,048 doses
TOTAL: 1,24,84,09,832

NATIONWIDE	NOV 30	DEC 01
Fresh cases	6,990	8,954
Recoveries	10,116	10,204
Deaths	190	267

KARNATAKA	NOV 30	DEC 01
Fresh cases	291	322
Recoveries	745	162
Deaths	8	2

Six positive cases from at-risk countries

Six Covid-positive cases were reported on Wednesday after screening 3,476 passengers from 11 flights that arrived in India from 'at-risk' countries. Their samples have been sent for genomic sequencing, the health ministry said

Not fully vaccinated? No entry at malls, parks

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

ONLY those who have completed both doses of vaccination will be allowed inside malls, theatres and parks, and the order comes into force with immediate effects, said BBMP Chief Commissioner Gaurav Gupta on Wednesday.

The decision, based on the recommendations made by the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), was taken after Gupta met health department officials. Directions are also being issued to all schools to test at least 10 per cent of children for Covid once a month. Discussions will be held with hotel, vendor and resident associations to conduct regular tests and to convince their members to complete their full dosage.

BBMP Special Commissioner, Health, Dr KV Thrilok Chandra said that BBMP marshals, security and other staff at apartments, offices and other premises will be deployed to check whether the visitors are vaccinated.

"Everyone has their vaccination certificates on their smartphones. They have to show it before entry, along with the regular mandatory Covid screening. The decision has been taken as cases are fluctuating and new variants are emerging," he said.

According to BBMP records, as on November 30, 1,40,20,978 doses have been administered. In all, 81,01,697 have taken the first dose and 59,19,281 the second. P3

REVISED GUIDELINES FOR INT'L TRAVELLERS

- Travellers from only at-risk countries to be tested
- **THE COUNTRIES ARE:** countries in Europe, South Africa, Brazil, Botswana, China, Mauritius, New Zealand, Zimbabwe, Singapore, Hong Kong & Israel
- **IF NEGATIVE:** Travellers to follow home quarantine for seven days, get re-tested on eighth day
- If positive, samples will be sent for genomic sequencing and travellers to be managed at a separate isolation facility

UPWARD TREND

K'taka GST mop-up zooms past ₹9,000 cr

BANSY KALAPPA @ Bengaluru

THE GST collection in Karnataka has seen a strong upward movement, increasing from about ₹8,200 crore in October 2021 to ₹9,048 crore by November 30, 2021. Compared to the GST collection in November last year which was ₹6,915 crore there is a 31 per cent growth.

Even as the state and country are facing Omicron fears, economists said that the northward movement in GST collection is here to stay. The fundamentals are strong and GST collections may even come close to the ₹10,000 crore mark in December or January next year if the growth rate continues, they added. P4

GST kitty at ₹1.31 L cr

GST collections in India jumped to over ₹1.31 lakh crore in November, the second highest since its implementation in 2017, in line with the recovery, the Centre said on Wednesday. P13

UPA is over, says Didi after meeting Pawar

SUDHIR SURYAWANSHI @ Mumbai

WEST Bengal chief minister and Trinamool Congress supremo Mamata Banerjee, who is aggressively pushing the idea of a non-Congress opposition front against the BJP, said on Wednesday that regional parties must come together as the Congress-led UPA is defunct.

"There is no UPA now," she said after meeting NCP chief Sharad Pawar at residence in Mumbai on Wednesday. "UPA is over. Now, the regional parties who are opposed to the BJP must come together and put up a joint fight," she added.

Earlier in the day, Mamata held a meeting with activists and civil society members. Taking a swipe at Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, she said one can't do politics in India by staying in a foreign country. "If a person wants to stay in a foreign country most of the time, how will it work in politics? If you are not on the ground, the BJP will defeat you," she said.

While extending support to Mamata, Pawar asked NCP ministers to meet her to boost their fight against the BJP in Maharashtra. On who will lead the anti-BJP front, Pawar said it will be sorted out after the polls through consensus.

Meanwhile, the Congress pooh-poohed Mamata's political moves. "Thinking that anybody can defeat the BJP without the Congress is merely a dream," said party General Secretary K C Venugopal. Maharashtra PCC chief Nana Patole said only the Congress can give a strong alternative to BJP.

On Tuesday, Mamata had met Shiv Sena leader Sanjay Raut and Maharashtra environment minister Aaditya Thackeray.

NCP president Sharad Pawar with West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee after their meeting at his residence in Mumbai on Wednesday | PTI

UPA is over. Now, the regional parties who are opposed to the BJP must come together and put up a joint fight

Mamata Banerjee, TMC president

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   - 5.2 You may update the records for all of your LIC policies using the above link.
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   - (ii) DP registered with CDSL - https://sebi.gov.in/sebiweb/other/OtherAction.do?doRecognisedFpi=yes&intmId=18
   - (iii) If your KYC by a KRA (KYC Registration Agency) is not verified, then you need to provide the following key documents to the DP to open the DEMAT account:
     - Recent photograph
     - PAN card
     - Address proof
     - Cancelled cheque
   - (iv) The respective DP might also ask for some more relevant documents, basis their internal requirements.
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Regards,
Team LIC

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SUDHA BHARADWAJ GRANTED DEFAULT BAIL

ENS @ Mumbai

THE Bombay High Court on Wednesday granted default bail to lawyer and activist Sudha Bharadwaj who has been under arrest in the Bhima Koregaon case since August 2018.

However, it refused bail to eight other accused in the case. Bharadwaj will now be produced before the Special Court, NIA, Mumbai on December 6 to define the terms and conditions for her bail.

A default bail is granted when the probe agency fails to file its chargesheet within 90 days of arrest of the accused. The eight other accused who sought bail were Surendra Gadling, Varavara Rao, Sudhir Dhawale, Shoma Sen, Rona Wilson, Mahesh Raut, Vernon Gonsalves and Arun Ferreira.

The petition by Bharadwaj had argued that two additional sessions judges of the Pune sessions court, who remanded them in custody, had not been designated as special judges and therefore, could not have taken cognisance of their case under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA). P10

After Faruqui, Kamra's B'luru shows shelved

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

DAYS after permission was denied to a stand-up comedy show by Munawar Faruqui in Bengaluru, a series of shows featuring comedian **Kunal Kamra** has been cancelled in the city. It is said that Kamra's shows were cancelled following protests by residents near the venue at JP Nagar.

The shows were scheduled over the next 20 days. Police sources said the organisers had not informed them about the shows nor had they denied permission. "We have nothing to do with the shows. We came to know that there were protests by a few people at the venue and the organisers called off the show," a senior police officer said.

Interestingly, the venue, where the shows were to be held, remained unidentified. P7

EXPRESS READ

Akali Dal leader Manjinder Singh Sirsa joins BJP

New Delhi: Shiromani Akali Dal leader and Delhi Sikh Gurdwara Management Committee chief Manjinder Singh Sirsa joined the BJP on Wednesday, in the presence of senior leaders and Union ministers Dharmendra Pradhan and Gajendra Singh Shekhawat.

Jaish commander among two terrorists killed in J&K

Srinagar: Terrorist commander of Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) Yasir Parray and a foreign ultra were killed in an encounter with security forces in Pulwama district of Jammu and Kashmir on Wednesday, the Union Territory's police said.

'Dead' man returns home, police confused

Tumakuru: In a bizarre incident, an elderly man whom family members had presumed dead and conducted the last rites three months ago, surfaced on Tuesday at Chikkamaluru village. Police are clueless as to whose body they had dispatched after postmortem. P7